

The Best Verse of the Week

Easter, Springtime and All Outdoors Reflected in These Poems

A Chant for Days in the Woods

By Marguerite Wilkinson.

God of grave nights,
God of brave mornings,
God of silent noons,
Hear my salutation!

For where the rapids rage white and scornful
I have passed safely, full of wonder;
Where the sweet pools dream under willows
I have been swimming, full of joy.

God of round hills,
God of green valleys,
God of clear springs,
Hear my salutation!

For where the moose feeds I have eaten berries;
Where the moose drinks I have drunk deep;
Where the storms crash through broken heavens,
And under clear skies, I have known love.

God of great trees,
God of wild grasses,
God of little flowers,
Hear my salutation!

For where the deer crops and the beaver plunges,
Near the river I have pitched my tent;
Where the pines cast aromatic needles
On a still floor, I have known peace.

God of grave nights,
God of brave mornings,
God of silent noons,
Hear my salutation!

From the Nation.

In Hospital

By Coningsby Dawson.

Hushed and happy whiteness,
Miles on miles of cots,
The glad, contented brightness
Where sunlight falls in spots.

Sisters swift and saintly
Seem to tread on grass;
Like flowers stirring faintly,
Heads turn to watch them pass.

Beauty, blood and sorrow,
Blending in a trance—
Eternity's to-morrow
In this half-way house of France.

Sounds of whispered talking,
Labored, indrawn breath;
Then, like a young girl walking,
The dear familiar Death.

From The Glory of the Trenches. (John Lane Company.)

Epitome.

By Nan Apotheker.

Why did I come with a quickening heart,
Thinking to bring you some special gift?
I think it was two deep lines near your mouth,
A life-weary look in your laughing eyes
That sent me away on a rare, high dream
Of what I would be for you.
I would take you with me where beauty moved,
Quiet, deep beauty.
Your vision helping me; mine you.

Shining baubles had slipped through your careless
hands;
Vivid colors had flashed by your artist's eyes;
Every octave had sounded for you;
You knew all there was to know; laughter . . .
pain.

I dreamed too much. . . .
I had nothing to give that was like my dream,
And you—
You've had another episode!

The Tuscania Dead.

By Carroll Peabody.

For these our sons, our dearest and our best,
By far more fitting was that khaki shroud
Than any robe of state bearing the proud
Insignia of rank or splendid crest
Hard won by kingly deeds. At no behest
Of kings did these go forth; for them no loud
Acclaim of chanting choirs; no royal crowd
With wreaths of bay enhance their final rest.
Beneath our flag, dear gift of Scotland's heart,
Gathered the humble of the earth to mourn;
They wept as mothers weep when last they part
With those who seek the undiscovered bourne.
For these our sons who died that men might live
No burial like this could princes give!

From the Public.

Easter

By Ralph M. Thomson.

Easter—and near and far
The Christian world at war!
And by Fate's strange caprice,
The heathen lands at peace!
How Christ, who came to give
His life that men might live,
Must weep again and know
Golgotha's pain and woe!

How Will It Seem?

By Charles Hanson Towne.

How will it seem when Peace comes back once more,
After these desperate days of shattering pain?
How will it be with all of us again,
When hushed forever is the thunder of War?
There still are primroses by many a shore;
And still there bloom, in many a lovely lane,
Hawthorn and lilacs; and the roses' strain
Is red against full many a garden door.

Oh, days to be! Oh, honeyed nights of sleep,
When the white moon shall mount the quiet sky!
Shall we be wholly happy when buds creep,
Remembering those who dared to bleed and die?
Can we be glad again? Or shall we weep
For those who told this sad, glad world good-by?
From Harper's.

Spring Song

By William Griffith.

Softly at dawn a whisper stole
Down from the Green House on the Hill,
Enchanting many a ghostly bole
And wood song with the ancient thrill.

Gossiping on the country side,
Spring and the wandering breezes say
God has thrown heaven open wide,
And let the thrushes out to-day.
From City Pastorals and Other Poems. (James I.
White & Company.)

Afterwards

By Capt. Cyril Morton Horne.

In the Afterwards, when I am dead,
I want no flowers over my head.

But if Fate and the Gods are kind to me
They'll send me a Sikh half company
To fire three volleys over my head—
To sweeten my sleep, when I am dead.

And many shall sneer: But Some One shall sigh,
Yet I shall not hear them as there I lie,
For this is the Law of Lover and friend—
That all joy must finish, all feeling end.

And many shall laugh: But Some One shall weep,
Yet I shall not know—I shall lie asleep;
A wornout body, a dried up crust;
Ashes to ashes and dust to dust!

And they'll drink a toast up there in the Mem,
"Here's to a friend in his loneliness!"
And music and talk for a while shall cease
While my Brothers drink to their Brother's Peace.

And the Sikhs shall say (that were once mine own):
"Who rode with us often now rides alone!"
And leaning over the grave they'll sigh—
"Sahib murgya! Ki jae, Ki jae!"

And I, who so loved them one and all,
Shall stir no more at the bugle call,
But another Sahib shall ride instead
At the head of my Sikhs, when I am dead.
And even this thought which hurts me so,
Shall cease to trouble me when I go.

My chestnut charger, Mam'selle,
(She was fleet of foot and I loved her well!)
Shall nibble the grass above my head,
Unknowing that one she loved is dead.

Some one—my Horse and my Company
Shall fail to smile at the comedy;
Shall strive to reason, yet fail to guess
That Life is little and Death is less!

And they shall sorrow a little space
Till somebody comes to fill my place;
But all their sorrow, their grief and pain,
They shall expend upon me—in vain!

And you—if you read this epitaph—
Harden your heart, I pray you, laugh!
But if you would deal with me tenderly
Place one dew-kissed violet over me;
I claim not this and ask no more,
Yet—this was the flow'r that Some One wore
In the long dead days that have gone before.
From Songs of the Shrapnel Shell. (Harper & Bros.)

The Heralds of Spring

By Jean Brooke Burt.

Wild geese of the Southland,
Flying heralds of spring,
Following low on the river's course,
What does your coming bring?
Running of snows in the canyon,
Creeks that are mad with mirth,
Poignant stirring of growing things,
And scent of the good ploughed earth.

Cool, glad mornings of April,
Dawns when the wind rides free,
Pines that are warmed with sunlight,
These are the things to be.
Wild geese out of the Southland,
Herald the news as you fly!
Sing the song of the young green earth,
Gray wings spread to the sky!
From the Outlook.

Sweet Clover

By Edgar Lee Masters.

Only a few plants—and not a blossom
My clover didn't catch. What is the matter?
Old John comes by. I show him my result.
Look, John! My clover patch is just a failure,
I wanted you to sow it. Now you see
What comes of letting Hunter do your work.
The ground was not ploughed right, or disked perhaps,
Or harrowed fine enough, or too little seed
Was sown.

But John, who knows a clover field,
Pulls up a plant and cleans the roots of soil
And studies them.

He says, Look at the roots!
Hunter neglected to inoculate
The seed, for clover seed must always have
Clover bacteria to make it grow
And blossom. In a thrifty field of clover
The roots are studded thick with tubercles
Like little warts, made by bacteria.
And somehow these bacteria lay hold
Upon the nitrogen that fills the soil,
And make the plants grow, make them blossom too.
When Hunter sowed this field he was not well;
He should have hauled some top soil to this field
From some old clover field, or made a culture
Of these bacteria and soaked the seed
In it before he sowed it.

As I said,
Hunter was sick when he was working here.
And then he ran away to Indiana
And left his wife and children. Now he's back.
His cough was just as bad in Indiana
As it is here. A cough is pretty hard
To run away from. Wife and children too
Are pretty hard to leave, since thought of them
Stays with a fellow and cannot be left.
Yes, Hunter's back, but he can't work for you.
He's straightening out his little farm and making
Provision for his family. Hunter's changed.
He is a better man. It almost seems
That Hunter's blossomed.
I am sorry for him.
The doctor says he has tuberculosis.
From Toward the Gulf. (The Macmillan Company.)

Moon Flight.

By Cale Young Rice.

That wingless bird, the moon,
With silvery phantom breast,
Flutters around the earth
And cannot find a nest.
Her mystic plumes are moulted
Each month, and dropt to men,
But ever does nest yearning bring
Their beauty back again.

From Wraiths and Realities. (The Century Company.)

Worship

By Frederic Manning.

Earth, sea and skies,
For me are in thine eyes,
Yea, thou for me
Holdest within thyself eternity.

As the dew's sphere
Encloses all the clear
Fires hung in the night,
The thin moon and the shaken seas delight.

And there the rose
Where seraphs throne them, glows
Quiring God's name,
With music that is sound of joy made flame.
God's very grace
Is perfect in thy face,
Mirrored such wise
That I mine own soul there imparadise.

From Eidos. (E. P. Dutton & Co.)